



Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission

October 23, 2012

Air Pollution Control District Boardroom

Meeting Minutes

I. Welcome and Announcements

Katy Schneider and Henry Heuser, Jr., Commission Co-chairs, welcomed Louisville Metro Tree Advisory Commission (hereinafter, "Commission" or LMTAC) members and guests.

Henry welcomed ex-officio Commissioner and Louisville Metro Arborist Mark White back after a medical absence. Henry asked for any other announcements. Katy stated that Henry had offered to purchase a banner for the Commission's use at events. Discussion followed of what type of banner, its dimensions, whether to get one or two, and where the design files reside. The current logo was designed by APCD Environmental Coordinator and LMTAC Projects and Maintenance Committee member Eric Burnette.

II. Approval of Minutes

Henry called for approval of the minutes. They received unanimous approval.

III. Secretary/Treasurer's Report – Allen Steinbock

Allen Steinbock, Commission Secretary/Treasurer, reported that Louisville Grows, Inc. and the Center for Neighborhoods had been considered as possible fiscal agents. Allen and Katy Schneider met with the board of directors for the Center for Neighborhoods. They will meet again with the Center for Neighborhoods on October 24th to continue the process of establishing the Center as fiscal agent for the Commission.

IV. Presentation: "MSD Consent Decree Dollars and Trees" – Wes Sydnor, PE, Senior Technical Services Engineer, MSD

Henry introduced Wes Sydnor for a special presentation. Wes works on MSD's Project WIN, an effort to get the city in compliance with an EPA consent decree to reduce combined sewer overflows.

Notes from the presentation:

MSD was formed in 1946. In 1958, the first wastewater treatment plant was built, and it is still the biggest one in Kentucky. In 1972, the Clean Water Act was passed, which gave EPA authority to regulate these systems and enter into enforcement actions and consent decrees, such as the one that MSD is currently implementing to reduce combined sewer overflows in Louisville Metro. MSD has thousands of miles of sewers and several large treatment plants. It is also responsible for Louisville's flood protection system.

Wes showed a nineteenth century map of Louisville that depicted streams running through downtown, Old Louisville, and the South End. None of those streams exist today. As the city developed, Wes explained, those streams were channeled into pipes. That was the forerunner to the combined sewer system. One of the things MSD is trying to do is to reintroduce natural solutions to stormwater management.

In that earlier time, sewers were basically ditches in the middle of the street. This led to public health issues. In response, the city built its first sewer system. Prior to 1958, all Louisville wastewater was channeled into local creeks and the Ohio River. Wes said that some of the old sewer pipes downtown and in West Louisville are big enough to drive a train through, due to the need to accommodate all of the city's wastewater.

Wes shared an infographic showing a typical combined sewer system. Louisville's combined sewer system is generally in the area inside the Watterson Expressway. In a combined sewer system, sanitary sewers and storm sewers go to the same pipes. At one point, that mixed wastewater/stormwater went directly into the river. Now, that effluent is sent to the wastewater treatment plant. However, during excessive rain events the system backs up, and release valves spill over into local waterways, including Beargrass Creek and the Ohio River. This is called a combined sewer overflow (CSO).

There are a few different ways to deal with the combined sewer problem: gray solutions (concrete infrastructure such as catch basins) or green infrastructure (trees, bioswales, pervious pavement, etc.). MSD's goal is to catch the water before it gets to the combined system and results in CSOs.

There have been several green demonstration projects, including the new green roof at the Metro Housing Authority building on Vine Street. MSD wants to apply those solutions across the consent decree area. If more rainwater can be intercepted with trees and green infrastructure, less gray infrastructure construction is needed, which will save money. And, because of the EPA consent decree, it's mandatory that the city spend the money necessary to solve the problem.

Wes shared that MSD is offering incentives for green roofs, pervious pavement, bioswales, and urban reforestation. MSD has been undertaking this planting effort through grants, which at this point represent 3,000 trees. Partners include the Downtown Management District, Cherokee Triangle Association, and UofL. MSD wants to make the case to the EPA that the city can deal with its sewer problem through green infrastructure and reduce the amount of gray infrastructure. Trees also have many ancillary benefits. MSD has been trying to figure out where it makes the most sense to displace gray projects with green projects.

Henry asked if it's well known that MSD was offering money for pervious pavement. Wes said they have seen a lot of interest in the program.

Wes said that so far MSD has had about 200 million gallons of capture through different green methods.

Henry asked about whether people had applied for the 3,000 trees. Wes said yes, five grant applications have accounted for those 3,000 trees. There are guidelines associated with planting trees from MSD: e.g., trees can't be planted over sewers or under other infrastructure; trees have to be on LDC's approved list; and there has to be a commitment to maintain the trees for seven years, some of which was priced into the tree cost. Wes reported that MSD is now reviewing applications for second round of approvals.

Henry asked if there are any trees that have been planted that could be photographed and publicized. Wes said UofL had already planted some but that the other organizations were waiting until it got cooler. The Downtown Management District will be planting in tree wells where the existing trees are dead or impaired.

Katy asked if MSD had a plan for where the tree money would go, how much money there was, and where the trees would go. Wes said the plan they're using was a 2009 plan, posted on MSD's website. That plan calls for 1,000 trees a year at a cost of \$240 per tree for 10 years. They're waiting for the applicants to tell MSD where the applicants want the trees.

Katy asked whether MSD would have an interest in the LMTAC Master Plan process and whether they could fund the part that would address MSD's needs in terms of finding where to plant the trees. Wes said he thought they would have an interest, but it would have to be approved by the MSD director and board.

Katy said Philadelphia used some of its consent decree money to plan for tree planting and management. Wes said Philadelphia has a very robust green program. Katy wondered such a program had been implemented somewhere else. Wes said he has a contact in Philadelphia, so he could follow up. Katy wanted to know what they were doing, as LMTAC was working on an RFP for the tree plan. Henry asked Katy what it would cost. Katy said she had no idea. But, she said, a representative from the Davey Tree Institute had informally said they would come down and do a pre-proposal with no obligation and no cost, so LMTAC could get an idea of what they would do and how much it would cost. She said it could be a couple hundred thousand dollars but she didn't know.

Henry asked if there was anything else. Mike Hayman, co-chair of the Projects and Maintenance Committee asked about planting trees in the tree wells downtown "where trees die." He asked if those trees couldn't be planted somewhere else. Commissioner and Outreach & Education Committee Co-Chair Monica Orr said that there is technology that could allow trees to thrive in those spaces by amending the tree wells. Mike said there are several ways and that he's working with different groups to get specifications for the tree wells to take them from 75 cubic feet to something more. He said it might cost a few thousand dollars per tree well, but he'd rather have fewer trees planted if they were to live longer.

Wes said MSD has an urban forestry program and also a green program. They've looked at augmenting the existing tree wells and creating a situation where the street runoff can run into the tree well and infiltrate, both helping the stormwater and watering the tree, but that it comes out of a different pot of money—it would be a green infrastructure project, not just a tree project. The curb cuts and infiltrating wells could be funded, but the funding was based on how much water drains into it. But Wes said it could make it closer to a break-even.

Ex-officio Commissioner and Metro Parks Forestry and Landscape Manager Mesude Duyar said Metro Parks had received one of MSD's tree grants and was ready to plant the trees this fall, but the agreement hadn't been approved at MSD, so things were held up. Wes said he thought that in that particular case, the county attorney had said funding to Metro Parks would have to go through the Metro Council. Wes said he would follow up. Henry said Wes was always welcome to come back and that the next meeting was December 4th.

V. New Business

a. Future Commission Plans – Katy Schneider

Katy said LMTAC was around the halfway mark of its first year and had talked to Louisville Metro Sustainability Director (and LMTAC designee for Economic Growth and Innovation Director Ted Smith) Maria Koetter about a path forward. A big priority, she said, will be the Urban Canopy Master Plan RFP. She also said LMTAC will formalize its reporting to the Mayor through Maria. Henry added that committee co-chairs need to give committee reports with dates and that LMTAC needs the mayor to be the spokesman to tell the community what's going on.

b. Grant Opportunity – Katy Schneider

Katy reported that a US Forest Service grant opportunity was discussed with the state forestry representative. The purpose of the grant is community education and engagement and to get trees into underserved areas. The grant can be as much as \$300,000, but must be matched at a 1 to 1 ratio. Katy said that awards are usually closer to \$100,000 and that LMTAC will try to get something submitted by the December 2nd deadline, for which the Davey Tree Institute has offered its help. She added that the Outreach & Education Committee has been working on a tree stewardship program. Commissioner Scott Hannah asked who was going to write the grant. Katy said ex-officio Commissioner and APCD Environmental Supervisor Michelle King and other APCD staff might be able to assist. Scott said that would be good. Katy noted that LMTAC just found out about this opportunity. Scott asked what the match would be right now. Katy said it could be volunteer time. Monica noted that volunteer time is typically valued at \$25/hr. Michelle said we would need to talk to Maria about whether funding would go through Metro Government or the Center for Neighborhoods. Katy said Jefferson County League of Cities was very eager to get involved in a tree stewardship program and might also be able to provide money.

c. By-Laws Committee – Katy Schneider and Michelle King

Katy and Michelle explained that the executive order that created LMTAC gave it the authority to create by-laws. They noted that this would provide more structure to the group's proceedings. Katy told those interested in helping draft by-laws to let Michelle know. Michelle said she would send out an email to ask for the voluntary participation of other commissioners.

VI. Committee Reports

Henry mentioned that he was going to the Arbor Day Foundation Partners in Community Forestry conference in Sacramento in November. Mesude said she was also going.

a. Projects and Maintenance – Mike Hayman

Committee Co-Chair Mike Hayman said there had been a discussion about whether the Projects and Maintenance (P&M) Committee was going to do the planting or going to do the planning. He said both, so the committee would work to document strategies and best practices, and in the meantime it would continue planting trees. Eco-Tech's donation of 1,000 trees gave a boost. He said there

were 10 different ongoing projects of the committee. In some areas, Mike said he was doing everything; in other areas, he was an advisor to local stakeholders. One project had 40 trees that are self-initiated and self-financed by local residents; Mike simply helped them find trees, find places, etc., and facilitated the consultation with the Mark White, to ensure proper procedures were being followed. Katy said it would be a good idea to have a template for how to go about a project like this, so LMTAC could learn from it.

Henry asked how much the trees cost. Mike said \$225 for 2" planted trees. Mike said it was hard to model his process because his approach is to look at all existing factors, see what's missing, and fill the gap. Mike said the city will be re-treed neighborhood by neighborhood, not city-mandated. Katy mentioned that Mike had done memoranda of agreement with the neighborhoods he has helped undertake tree planting projects. Mike said he'd been doing opportunistic planting, but there wasn't an overall plan. He mentioned the Community Outreach and Education Committee's tree stewardship program and plan with the schools. Mike said that at one of P&M's meetings, committee member Eric Burnette brought up the development of a best practices guide. He also said the International Society of Arboriculture had a best practices guide that cost \$100, but would be 99% of what LMTAC needed for best practices.

Henry asked about Eco-Tech's 1,000 trees. Mike said he had committed 1,005 to interested parties and that EcoTech had agreed to donate another five trees if they all go through. Mike said almost all of the trees would be planted this fall and winter.

Henry mentioned the school system and noted that there are two Frederick Law Olmsted schools—one for boys and one for girls. Mike said that the potential for tree planting projects with the school system needs to be tackled. He mentioned Monica's current project to engage principals. Mike said the schools have a great deal of available planting space, but have a history of poor tree maintenance. He mentioned an upcoming lunch with Jefferson County Public Schools Grounds Manager Jim Fegenbush to see what could be done. Katy said that even though tree canopy revisions to the LDC are under consideration, the LDC doesn't affect school system. Michelle said schools were really important for a long-term strategy because students seeing those trees and learning to care for them will carry that knowledge forward, supporting the city's future canopy health.

Henry asked how much money Eco-Tech had committed to for trees. Mike said it was 100 trees a year, probably \$200 each. Henry felt that 100 companies should be matching it. Monica and Mike talked about Eco-Tech's trees and the positive publicity the company was getting for this voluntary donation. Mike underscored that it was well deserved. Henry said the Mayor's State of the City address will be at the Rotary Club in February. He said that would be the ideal time for the Mayor to roll out a "formal ask" for companies to match funds for trees. Henry expressed a desire to attend the next P&M committee meeting.

b. Community Outreach and Education – Monica Orr

Committee Co-Chair Monica Orr handed out an outline of the Community Education and Outreach (CO&E) committee's proposed recommendations to the Mayor for LMTAC's consideration (attached). These recommendations are for an outreach strategy framework and request feedback from the Mayor's Office on its development and implementation.

Monica said the CO&E committee was learning as it went and meeting opportunities as they arose. She recently made a contact with an environmental science teacher at Moore Traditional High

School. Monica stated that the school has two focuses —medicine and environmental science—and that the environmental side didn't get enough attention. She said they were going to try to get the students to help create a student stewardship program and that the students were currently doing a lot of research on trees, so they would have a sense of ownership. She said the principal had committed to planting and maintaining five trees, which Mike said were ready to go. Monica said they were also concerned about over-the-summer watering, since school would be out of session. She has been working to get the school's Booster Club on board for this responsibility as the trees would have to be monitored all summer. She also mentioned trying to get a Boy Scout troop involved in both tree maintenance and the stewardship program. A widespread school tree planting program would likely first involve people at the individual school site and later JCPS administration. Henry mentioned a contact of his in JCPS administration.

Monica mentioned that LMTAC had already seen the CO&E PowerPoint presentation. She said it may or may not be useable in the long run, but she had spoken to neighborhood groups, the Beckham Bird Club, and others. But, she said, the CO&E committee needed the exact message from LMTAC of what LMTAC wanted to be conveyed to the public. Once LMTAC stated some clear policies about what direction the community needed to go in, she said it would be easier to get that message out through multiple media. She added that the message needed to be polished.

Mesude said Metro Parks was growing its own trees at Seneca Nursery, which made them cheaper. With the approval of the director of the Metro Parks, she said they could provide trees for school educational purposes. Monica said one of the teachers was eager to establish a small nursery on campus. Katy asked where that was. Monica said Moore Traditional, but added that it could be done at other schools. Katy mentioned that there was a career curriculum for students who wanted to pursue forestry as a career.

c. Technical Advisory Committee – John Hamilton

John Hamilton, chair of the Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) said LMTAC had tasked that committee with coming up with an Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) response plan. He went to a conference in Ohio and talked to people about what goes into a response plan. In Ohio, there was a standard statewide template. He said Louisville could work with that template, but that there's no local ash tree data to work with. This makes it difficult to know which trees Metro Government is responsible for and even more difficult to know about trees in residential yards. Without that data, he said, his committee couldn't project what resources would be needed to deal with EAB. John said Mesude had worked Metro Parks trees because they maintain a very detailed database of their own trees. John said the Davey Tree Institute gave an estimate. Mesude said the inventory would cost \$3-\$3.50 per tree if done all at once but \$4 per tree if done in pieces.

Katy said there had been discussions about inventorying the city's trees but that inventorying street trees was a waste of money unless there was a commitment from the city to do something with the data. So, she said, the focus on the initial plan should be: What is the current urban tree canopy in certain neighborhoods and what is the potential for increasing that canopy? Monica pointed out that when EAB has had its full effect, it would be an emergency because the infected trees would fall. Katy said the city would have to make choices and decide what data it would be able to use. She also said there was a need for data at a council level so LMTAC could say "this is what's happening in your district." But since a full inventory would really commit the city to maintenance, she said, the city hasn't made that commitment.

Scott Hannah noted that maintenance was going to be a huge part of the plan. It wouldn't make sense, he said, to plant a bunch of trees and then let 10% of the canopy slide because of EAB. Mesude said keeping up with the data wasn't that difficult if it was being done for the trees for which Metro Government was responsible. She said that Parks uses a computer database program to keep track of their inventory. Katy said LMTAC was going back and forth somewhat and that the Master Plan wouldn't be an end-document, but rather something that was going to constantly be added to.

John said LMTAC should also focus on legal questions, such as how to communicate the city's plan of action to citizens and how to make sure they understood the scope of city involvement was limited and did not include their yards. To address EAB issues for ash trees in residential yards, he said the city would need a public information campaign. For people who couldn't afford to treat or replace an ash tree, he said the tree fund could be used. John said Kentucky is on the northern tier of southern states, which haven't felt the EAB yet. He suggested that if LMTAC were to approach the Forest Service in Atlanta, it might be able to get some support.

An audience member asked to comment, which Katy allowed. The woman commented that Windy Hills has a tree program and just passed a tree ordinance. She noted that even "the guy who was against the tree ordinance" wanted to do something about EAB. Another woman spoke and explained that they were both from the City of Windy Hills and that the city was trying to get some ordinances passed, do an inventory, and would like to use LMTAC as a resource. John said LMTAC had agreed to host the Kentucky Tree Board Seminar in February, so commissioners should say what questions they want to be addressed.

VII. Discussion

Henry noted the seemingly low priority that tree health had been given by Metro Government, saying that if a snowflake falls, there was a huge city response, but that if there was a historic drought and heat wave, there was no response. He asked Maria if she could find out where Public Works stands on this issue. Monica said there used to be a line item in the city budget for tree maintenance, but it is no longer there. Henry asked what watering tanks would cost and how much it would take to get one.

Henry also thanked Courier-Journal environmental reporter Jim Bruggers, who attended the meeting, for having previously written several stories highlighting the importance of trees in Louisville and the great need for additional planting and maintenance efforts.

Henry asked if anyone else had anything to say. Audience member Nick Hart spoke about a Belknap Neighborhood Association project that is being undertaken with guidance from P&M committee co-chair Mike Hayman. He said the first stage was to get trees in the ground and the second stage was to develop a tree planting plan. He added that he would like to include it in LMTAC's long term plan so that other groups could learn from their experiences.

VIII. Adjourn

The next Commission meeting will be December 4th at 5:00 in the Air Pollution Control District boardroom.